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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 04659

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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 004659

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2009
TAGS: [PREL](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE PRESIDENT HOSTS TALKS WITH ABBAS, QOREI

REF: ABU DHABI 4513

(U) Classified by Richard A. Albright, Charge d, Affaires,
a.i., reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed received PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei December 19, marking the first time Khalifa and Abbas had met since the deaths of Sheikh Zayed and Yasser Arafat. The visit, which received substantial media coverage, allowed the UAE and Palestinian leaders to discuss the approaching elections in the Palestinian territories, and the dialogue with all Palestinian factions. President Khalifa reiterated the UAE,s complete commitment to the Palestinians, and the UAE,s support for the efforts of the Palestinian leadership to unite the different factions. Abbas praised the UAE for its generosity toward the Palestinians, citing in particular the Red Crescent Society,s fund-raising efforts on behalf of refugees.

¶2. (U) Abbas and Qorei had a separate meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed, Information Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and MFA Under Secretary Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi. In a statement to the press, Sheikh Hamdan said that the UAE,s stance under President Khalifa would remain permanently in support of the Palestinian people. Abbas and Qorei,s delegation included the PA Finance Minister.

¶3. (U) In an exclusive interview in English-language Gulf News, Abbas said elections &are an expression of our march toward democracy.8 He said that Prime Minister Sharon was creating problems by deciding to unilaterally withdraw all Jewish settlers from Gaza Strip, and added that the withdrawal undermined the Middle East Roadmap. &I reject Sharon,s offer because it jumps over the final status agreements,8 the told Gulf News. He was also critical of the U.S. for supporting Sharon,s withdrawal plan. In the interview, he rebuked Hamas and Islamic Jihad for using armed resistance in the Intifada.

Comment:

14. (C) In meetings with NEA DAS Dibble December 11 (reftel) and with Charge December 18, MFA Under Secretary Abdullah Rashid reiterated strong UAEG support for, and trust in, Abbas, and UAEG conviction that a unique opportunity to advance the peace process is at hand. Abdullah Rashid strongly urged U.S. leadership to move the process forward. Asked by Charge about UAE plans for support to the Palestinians, Abdullah Rashid remarked that the UAEG would continue to provide significant assistance. He stressed, however, that the UAE and Abbas had a good partnership, indicating that it would be easier for the UAEG to support the PA under his leadership.
ALBRIGHT